ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to consideration of H. Con. Res. 251, the adjournment resolution, which is at the desk, that the concurrent resolution be considered, agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 251) providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the request with regard to the measure is agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 251) was agreed to, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 251

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, October 17, 2001, it stand adjourned until 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 23, 2001, for morning hour debate, or until Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Wednesday, October 17, 2001, or Thursday, October 18, 2001, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 23, 2001, or at such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—REPORT ACCOMPANYING H.R. 2904

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, October 18—tomorrow—the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report accompanying H.R. 2904, the military construction appropriations bill, that there be up to 30 minutes of debate, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators FEINSTEIN and HUTCHISON of Texas or their designees; that at 11 a.m. the Senate vote on adoption of the conference report with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask it be in order to request the yeas and nays on adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2001

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Thursday, October 18; that on Thursday, immediately following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that there be a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each; further, at 10:30 a.m. the Senate begin consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2904, the Military Construction Appropriations Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand that Senator BYRD wishes to speak today, so I ask unanimous consent it now be in order that the Senate stand adjourned following the remarks of the Senator from West Virginia, and that would be under the previous order entered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AIRPORT SECURITY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this morning, October 17, the Washington Post reported that investigators from the Inspector General's Office of the Transportation Department and of the Federal Aviation Administration went to 14 airports over the past few days to test the ''improved'' safety standards at our nation's airports.

What these Federal investigators found is unacceptable.

At Dulles International Airport—where one of the planes involved in the September 11 terrorist attacks took off—seven baggage screeners failed a surprise written skills test. The screeners are supposed to pass such a test after completing the 12 hours of training that are a condition of employment.

On a check at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport the same day, seven screeners were arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service when they were found to be working illegally in the United States.

The Transportation Department said an unspecified number of screeners at some airports were found to have criminal records that should have disqualified them from their jobs. The Washington Post cited an example of a screener at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport who was removed from his post and lost his security badge after investigators learned that he had been convicted as a felon in possession of a handgun.

During the check at Dulles, Federal investigators arrested a man who they said was able to walk through a security checkpoint with a concealed pocketknife—a felony.

Such a report underscores the need for tighter security at our airports, and the American people are no doubt looking to Congress for the tougher airline security they were promised in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

The Senate did its part. Last week, on October 11, we unanimously passed legislation to increase security at our airports. The Senate-passed bill would create a Federal force of 28,000 screeners and armed security guards to check passengers and baggage.

According to media reports, however, that legislation has stalled in the House of Representatives because of a partisan dispute about whether airline screeners should be Federal employees or hired by private contractors.

We have tried that. We tried the hiring of screeners by private contractors. That is what has given the American people the heebie-jeebies. The Nation is jittery after having tried that. So what are we arguing about? What are we waiting on now?

Privatizing the Federal workforce is an issue that often surfaces in Congress. It is part of a 200-year-old debate about the proper size of the Federal Government. But that debate could not be more misplaced in today's post-September 11 environment.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, with air traffic at 40 to 50 percent below last year's level, we should be focusing our energies on ensuring that the American people feel as safe as we can reasonably make them when they fly. I think we can say with some confidence that the public has reason to be less than comfortable with the effectiveness of our airline security system as it currently exists.

It seems petty to derail the whole airline security package over the issue of federalization. This is not a new idea. Federal employees already perform key functions at U.S. airports, such as inspections by the Customs Service, the Agriculture Department, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. There has been no call to contract these services to the private sector.

All sides on this debate realize that there has to be a larger Federal role in